

71 *Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta* To Vacchagotta on the Threefold True Knowledge

1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Vesāli in the Great Wood in the Hall with the Peaked Roof.

2. Now on that occasion the wanderer Vacchagotta was staying in the Wanderers' Park of the Single White-lotus Mango Tree.⁷¹²

3. Then, when it was morning, the Blessed One dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Vesāli for alms. Then the Blessed One thought: "It is still too early to wander for alms in Vesāli. Suppose I went to the wanderer Vacchagotta in the Wanderers' Park of the Single White-lotus Mango Tree."

4. Then the Blessed One went to the wanderer Vacchagotta in the Wanderers' Park of the Single White-lotus Mango Tree. The wanderer Vacchagotta saw the Blessed One coming in the distance and said to him: "Let the Blessed One come, venerable sir! Welcome to the Blessed One! It is long since the Blessed One found an opportunity to come here. Let the Blessed One be seated; this seat is ready." The Blessed One sat down on the seat made ready, and the wanderer Vacchagotta [482] took a low seat, sat down at one side, and said to the Blessed One:

5. "Venerable sir, I have heard this: 'The recluse Gotama claims to be omniscient and all-seeing, to have complete knowledge and vision thus: "Whether I am walking or standing or sleeping or awake, knowledge and vision are continuously and uninterruptedly present to me."' ⁷¹³ Venerable sir, do those who speak thus say what has been said by the Blessed One, and not misrepresent him with what is contrary to fact? Do they explain in accordance with the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from their assertion?"

"Vaccha, those who say thus do not say what has been said

by me, but misrepresent me with what is untrue and contrary to fact.”⁷¹⁴

6. “Venerable sir, how should I answer that I may say what has been said by the Blessed One and not misrepresent him with what is contrary to fact? How may I explain in accordance with the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from my assertion?”

“Vaccha, if you answer thus: ‘The recluse Gotama has the threefold true knowledge,’ you will be saying what has been said by me and will not misrepresent me with what is contrary to fact. You will explain in accordance with the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from your assertion.

7. “For in so far as I wish, I recollect my manifold past lives, that is, one birth, two births...*(as Sutta 51, §24)*...Thus with their aspects and particulars I recollect my manifold past lives.

8. “And in so far as I wish, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I see beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and I understand how beings pass on according to their actions...*(as Sutta 51, §25)*...

9. “And by realising for myself with direct knowledge, I here and now enter upon and abide in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints.

10. “If you answer thus: ‘The recluse Gotama has the threefold true knowledge,’ [483] you will be saying what has been said by me and will not misrepresent me with what is contrary to fact. You will explain in accordance with the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from your assertion.”

11. When this was said, the wanderer Vacchagotta asked the Blessed One: “Master Gotama, is there any householder who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body has made an end of suffering?”⁷¹⁵

“Vaccha, there is no householder who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body has made an end of suffering.”

12. “Master Gotama, is there any householder who, without

abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body has gone to heaven?"

"Vaccha, there are not only one hundred or two or three or four or five hundred, but far more householders who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body have gone to heaven."

13. "Master Gotama, is there any Ājīvaka who, on the dissolution of the body, has made an end of suffering?"⁷¹⁶

"Vaccha, there is no Ājīvaka who, on the dissolution of the body, has made an end of suffering."

14. "Master Gotama, is there any Ājīvaka who, on the dissolution of the body, has gone to heaven?"

"When I recollect the past ninety-one aeons, Vaccha, I do not recall any Ājīvaka who, on the dissolution of the body, went to heaven, with one exception, and he held the doctrine of the moral efficacy of action, the doctrine of the moral efficacy of deeds."⁷¹⁷

15. "That being so, Master Gotama, that sectarian fold is empty even of one who goes to heaven."

"That being so, Vaccha, that sectarian fold is empty even of one who goes to heaven."

That is what the Blessed One said. The wanderer Vacchagotta was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.